State of Utah

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STATE OF UTAH
NATURAL RESOURCES
Division of Parks & Recreation

American Red Cross

UDOT
CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

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NEWS RELEASE
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Winter Weather Preparedness Week Topic For Thursday:
Backcountry Users, Snowmobilers Encouraged To Prepare Early

SALT LAKE CITY—As part of Winter Weather Preparedness Week, the USDA Forest Service and Utah State Parks and Recreation are encouraging all backcountry skiers and snowmobilers to prepare early for a safe and enjoyable winter season.

Avalanche victims are almost exclusively backcountry recreationists -- snowmobilers, climbers, snowboarders, snowshoers, skiers and hikers. Snowmobilers lead the list with twice the number of fatalities as any other activity. The Utah Avalanche Forecast Center and Utah State Parks post avalanche updates for the Western Uintas, Northern Utah and Manti-Skyline areas. Utah State Parks Snowmobile Education Coordinator Eric Stucki reminds riders to check avalanche conditions before venturing outdoors at www.avalanche.org or by calling (800) 648-7433.

"All backcountry recreationists, including snowmobilers, should carry a beacon, shovel and probe, and take advantage of free avalanche training," said Stucki. In addition to avalanche preparation, Stucki encourages all snowmobilers to make sure their machines are functioning properly and all riders have a properly fitting helmet, goggles and proper winter clothing.

Stucki also urges parents to enroll children in a Know Before You Go! snowmobile education course. Utah law requires drivers eight through 15 to possess an OHV education certificate while operating a snowmobile on public land. Drivers 16 years and older must have a valid driver license or OHV education certificate. Children under age eight cannot operate a snowmobile on public land. Know Before You Go! courses teach fundamentals of safe and responsible snowmobile riding.

For avalanche information, training and the Know Before You Go! program, please contact the Utah State Parks and Recreation OHV Education office at 1-800-OHV-RIDE.

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